United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/886
9 May 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General, in Washington, D.C., says visit confirms the support and commitment of United States to United Nations.

- Executive Chairman of Special Commission to monitor disarmament of Iraq says elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction is essential ingredient in achieving lasting peace in Middle East region.

- Allied forces in Persian Gulf are withdrawn from demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait.

- United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator appeals for immediate assistance to Bangladesh, devastated by cyclone.

- Special Committee on Peace-Keeping emphasizes importance of financial support as demand for such operations increases.

- Colombia and United Nations Drug Control Programme sign $4 million agreement for drug abuse prevention project.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today in a statement following a meeting with President George Bush in Washington, D.C., that his visit to the capital had been an important opportunity to discuss the urgent issues which concern both the United States and the United Nations. The discussions had, he said, as always, been "cordial, candid, far-reaching and productive". Moreover, for the United Nations the occasion had again confirmed the support and commitment of the United States and its people to the Organization.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the world's nations were calling insistently on the United Nations to be their forum and their agent for confronting problems. The response of the world community to these challenges would have to match the needs, he said.

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There existed a broader agreement than ever before on the nature and importance of the responsibilities that must be met, the Secretary-General said. At the same time, however, effective action was required to measure up to the speed and size of current events.

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The plan for the disposal of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, contained in the Security Council's cease-fire resolution of 3 April, was described today as "a sound plan" which was being implemented as envisaged by the Council. The description was made to the press by Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission established to oversee the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of Iraq's biological, chemical and ballistic missile capabilities. The Commission is to assist the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in disposing of Iraq's nuclear-weapons capabilities. It is also to submit a plan for the verification of Iraq's undertaking not to acquire such weapons in future.

Briefing correspondents at Headquarters, Mr. Ekeus said the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was an essential ingredient in achieving a lasting peace in the region. Describing Iraq's attitude so far as "cooperative", he said the Commission's task was to verify the correctness of the Iraqi declaration and to determine undeclared sites as well.

Mr. Ekeus went on to say that the destruction phase would not be easy. According to Iraq, some of the munitions in question were under the rubble of bombed buildings and some contained nerve gas.

Asked by correspondents if the weapons would be destroyed at what was described as "the one place in the world -- the United States facility in Johnston Island -- where chemical weapons can be destroyed safely", Mr. Ekeus said there were other facilities. He stressed the importance of economy, efficiency, speed and safety, which pointed towards the need for some other solution. However, while no options had as yet been excluded prior to on-site inspections, it was the Commission's view at present that "we have to destroy it on the spot", he said.

Asked if Iraq would have to pay for the destruction of its own weapons, Mr. Ekeus said it was his understanding that the costs would be assessed by the General Assembly and, hopefully, that they would be supplemented by voluntary contributions in cash and kind.

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A United Nations official said last night that the allied forces in the Persian Gulf were expected to be fully withdrawn today, 9 May, from the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait. The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) had completed its deployment in the zone between the two countries and was ready to take over.

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The official said UNIKOM's Major-General Gunther Greindl had been in Baghdad where he had met with Iraqi officials to inform them of the completion of the full deployment of the peace-keepers. He had asked them to withdraw from the demilitarized zone in compliance with Security Council resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April, which set the conditions for a cease-fire in the Gulf war. A similar request had been made to the Kuwaiti side.

While in Baghdad, the General had also met Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding, whom the Secretary-General has sent on a mission to Iraq to gather information on the refugee situation and the United Nations take-over of allied refugee camps, the official said.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General's Spokesman told correspondents today that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar had said just before the meeting with President Bush in Washington, D.C., that Mr. Goulding had reported from Baghdad that the Iraqi Government had rejected the idea of a United Nations police force in Iraq.

* * *

Briefing correspondents at Headquarters today about the effects of last week's cyclone in Bangladesh, the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, M'Hamad Essaafi, said the confirmed death toll of 125,000 was rising as more information was received from remote areas. He said the Government estimated that somewhere between 7 million to 10 million people had been affected by the disaster and that more than 2 million were in immediate need of water and food.

Mr. Essaafi said an appeal was being launched today by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) for immediate assistance, and another appeal would be launched within the next few months to finance the reconstruction of Bangladesh. So far, about $200 million had been pledged by the international community, while $1.4 billion was needed.

* * *

The Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations continued its debate yesterday on the financing of such operations.

Speakers emphasized that the recent establishment of UNIKOM and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) signalled the international community's confidence in United Nations peace-keeping operations, but said that confidence must be backed by financial commitment.

Also discussed were the merits of developing a legal definition of peace-keeping operations. Some speakers said a rigid definition was inappropriate to an evolving institution which responded to unpredictable events; others said guidelines for the conduct of peace-keeping operations would enhance their effectiveness.

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Among the speakers, Jean Feyder of Luxembourg, speaking on behalf of the 12 member countries of the European Economic Community (EEC), called for the prompt payment of all obligations to peace-keeping operations, which, he said, was in deficit of $358 million. He said the Twelve, contributing some 30 per cent of that total, were discharging their obligations.

Speaking for Nigeria, Ibrahim A. Gambari said his country had actively participated in five operations and had given financial, logistic and political support for all United Nations peace-keeping operations. He proposed that the Committee consider extending peace-making forces to, for example, Liberia and Angola, where civil strife could expand into inter-State conflicts.

Kirsten Norregaard Rasmussen of Denmark, speaking on behalf of Finland, Norway and Sweden, said four new operations for the near future were being discussed, all of which would pose additional requirements for the Secretariat. The Nordic countries had a training system that had been functioning for a number of years, and they were ready to share their experience, she said.

* * *

The Minister of Justice of Colombia, Jaime Giraldo Angel, and the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Giorgio Giacomelli, today signed an agreement for a $4 million drug abuse prevention project to help Colombian youth.

The three-year project is designed to develop lasting strategies and facilities to prevent young people at risk from becoming involved in drugs. It will address, in particular, the problem of youth unemployment and offer opportunities for personal development, training and counselling to those who might otherwise fall into a life of violence, crime, drug trafficking and drug abuse.

The United Nations Drug Control Programme is making the $4 million available under a new $38 million package of assistance to Colombia, which includes activities in the fields of drug abuse prevention and treatment, rural development and coca crop substitution, law enforcement and assistance to the judiciary.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/887
10 May 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General tells correspondents of possibility for Security Council to decide to set up United Nations operation in northern Iraq.

- Secretary-General holds talks with United States President in Washington.

- United Nations report calls damage inflicted by Iraqi forces on Kuwait's infrastructure during occupation "incalculable"; oil industry most affected sector.

- Secretary-General appeals for emergency assistance to some 30 million Africans whose suffering has been overshadowed by events in Persian Gulf and in other regions.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today commented on the proposal to send a United Nations police force to northern Iraq to protect the Kurdish population. Upon arriving at Headquarters from Washington, he said in reply to questions by correspondents that there could not be a police presence in Iraq without the consent of the Iraqi authorities, who had rejected the idea. However, he said, there existed a "possibility for the Security Council to decide to set up an operation in the northern Iraq".

Mr. Perez de Cuellar urged patience, adding that everyone was interested in moving as fast as possible.

Asked if the United Nations could ensure the safety of the Kurds without a police force, the Secretary-General said that depended on the Kurds themselves. The real problem was that the Kurds were expected to return to their homes, he said.

Touching on the topic of the disaster in Bangladesh, the Secretary-General said the international community's response had been "a

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little slow" and that he was concerned about the situation. Apart from Saudi Arabia, other countries that had promised help had not delivered so far, he said.

* * *

The Secretary-General met yesterday with United States President George Bush, Secretary of State James Baker and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft in the Oval Office of the White House. In the course of the discussions, the Secretary-General indicated that he had received word from Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding in Baghdad that Iraq had given "a very clear rejection" of the idea of a United Nations police presence on Iraqi soil.

The Secretary-General and his senior aides then met in the Cabinet Room with President Bush and a number of senior administration officials, including the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, and Assistant Secretary of State John Bolton. The discussions covered a broad range of international issues -- the situation in the Persian Gulf area, including humanitarian matters and the implementation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), El Salvador, Western Sahara, the Middle East, Lebanon, Cyprus, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. President Bush raised the matter of human rights in Cuba. There was also detailed discussion of United Nations finances.

On the subject of the proposed United Nations police force in northern Iraq, the Secretary-General informed the President that in his view, any United Nations security presence in Iraq would require specific authorization by the Security Council.

* * *

The Secretary-General has submitted to the Security Council a report by the United Nations mission sent to Kuwait to assess the damage inflicted on the country by Iraqi forces during seven months of occupation.

The mission, which was headed by former Under-Secretary-General Abdulrahim A. Farah, visited Kuwait from 16 March to 4 April.

The report calls the the damage inflicted on the Kuwaiti economy "incalculable" with the oil industry in shambles and other vital sectors of the infrastructure systematically sabotaged and plundered. According to the report, the population of Kuwait was struggling to recover from the consequences of its occupation by Iraq, which had left no part of the population or economy untouched.

The report states that the most visible and most significant of the sectors affected by the occupation was the oil industry. The unprecedented catastrophe of hundreds of burning and gushing oil wells, and the consequent pollution of the environment, overshadowed the damage on the rest of the industry. The estimated daily loss to Kuwait was between $40 million and as

much as $120 million. It was only by the capping of the oil wells that it would be possible to bring the industry back into operation, the report adds.

The report concludes that the most lasting environmental problem facing Kuwait would be that of mines and other unexploded ordnance. The danger posed to life would continue for a long time to come, it states.

* * *

The Secretary-General has appealed to the international community for support for humanitarian and relief operations in Africa in order quickly to alleviate the suffering and to avert an impending tragedy.

In a press communiqué today, he expressed deep concerned about the magnitude of emergency assistance requirements of African countries affected by drought and civil war, and the as yet inadequate response of the international community to those needs. He said the emergency situation had been overshadowed by the consequences the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and events in other regions. Additional resources were urgently needed to avoid a repetition of the tragic events of the famine that had swept parts of Africa in the mid-1980s, when many lives were unnecessarily lost before relief could be mobilized.

According to the communiqué, this year some 30 million Africans would require emergency relief in the form of food aid, medicine, shelter, clean water and supplementary food for children. While the areas of greatest concern were the Horn of Africa, the Sudan, southern Africa and Liberia, pockets of need existed throughout the continent.

The crisis has also given rise to massive flows of refugees who were among the most vulnerable victims of the upheavals in Africa today. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would, more than ever before, rely upon the traditional solidarity and generous support of the international community. According to current projections, the resources available in 1991 for UNHCR general programmes for Africa would definitely be insufficient, the communique states.

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United Nations

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Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/888
13 May 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees takes control of Zakho transit camp in northern Iraq.

- General Assembly acts without vote on broad reform programme for economic and social work of United Nations; calls for emergency help to Bangladesh.

- Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs opens first regular session of Economic and Social Council saying Gulf crisis has reinforced recessionary tendencies in world economy.

- Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator to meet in Geneva with heads of United Nations Children's Fund, World Food Programme and High Commissioner for Refugees to consider revised plan of action for Gulf region.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced today that it had decided to take control of the allied refugee camp in the town of Zakho in northern Iraq. The agency said in a press communiqué that the decision was taken after determining that the completed camp had been demilitarized and would continue to receive direct relief support from the coalition forces.

Citing the pressing humanitarian needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced Iraqis, the agency said it had assumed responsibility for the camp consisting of some 19,000 Kurds on the expectation that the current conditions of security would prevail.

According to the communiqué, about 200,000 Iraqis were beginning to return home after their month-long refuge along the mountainous Turkish-Iraqi border. The spontaneous repatriation movement had reduced the total population of the eight border camps to 230,000 people, while another 100,000

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were scattered outside camps along the border, it said. In addition, some 80,000 of the 1.3 million refugees who had found sanctuary in Iran had also started for home, the agency reported.

In a related development, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar told correspondents this morning that he had received information from Baghdad that the Iraqi authorities and the Kurds were making progress in talks currently under way to find a solution to the refugee problem.

Commenting on the proposal of a "police force" to protect the Kurds, he said the three Western countries in the Security Council for the proposal -- France, the United Kingdom and the United States -- might try to present a draft resolution to China and the Soviet Union. He said there was new thinking on the subject concerning protection of human rights even if it meant an infringement on the sovereignty of a Member country.

Asked about the role of his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, in the attempt to persuade the Iraqis to accept a police force, the Secretary-General said his main role was to help the Iraqi population, not only the Kurds but the Shi'ites in the south who were often forgotten. Sadruddin Aga Khan was also instructed to raise the question of a police force in order to get the Iraqi authorities' consent before any Council action.

* * *

A broad reform programme for the economic and social work of the Organization, focusing on the Economic and Social Council, was adopted this morning by the General Assembly in a resolution approved without a vote.

In another resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly called on Member countries to provide emergency assistance to Bangladesh in the wake of the devastation wreaked there by the recent cyclone.

On the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations economic and social role, the Assembly called for a new work programme for the Economic and Social Council starting in February 1992.

The resolution also called for a four-day organizational session of the Economic and Social Council in February and a four- to five-week substantive session between May and July, to take place alternatively in New York and Geneva.

When it meets again on Thursday, 16 May, the Assembly will consider the report of the Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) on financing the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and will take up a draft resolution on special emergency assistance to Haiti.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General has appealed to Member States to make advance contributions to finance the repatriation aspect of MINURSO.

In an addendum of 8 May to his recent report on the new peace-keeping force, he appealed for voluntary contributions totalling $34.5 million to be paid in full and in time for the UNHCR repatriation programme which he said was an essential political element in the settlement proposal. He said he was of the view that MINURSO should not be deployed at the target date unless it had received the necessary voluntary contributions. The overall cost of the Mission was estimated at $200 million. To date, no voluntary contributions have been received.

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A temporary surge in oil prices, disruptions in trade, the curtailment of workers' remittances and the destruction of production facilities during the Gulf crisis have reinforced recessionary tendencies in the world economy, according to Rafeeuddin Ahmed, Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs.

Mr. Ahmed made that statement this morning as the Economic and Social Council opened its first regular session of 1991. He predicted that while the world economy is expected to experience some slow growth in 1991, per capita output would fall for the second year in a row.

Also addressing the Council this morning was Margaret J. Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Ms. Anstee stressed the need for a unified and effective structure for social questions in the United Nations. If that key question were left unaddressed, it would be difficult to fulfil the Charter requirement "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

At the current session, the Council is expected to consider such matters as the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination; the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations; the world social situation; social development; human rights questions; the advancement of women; narcotic drugs; and emergency assistance to Somalia.

* * *

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) has announced that it will hold in Geneva on 15 May an important meeting convened by the Disaster Relief Coordinator, M'Hamed Essaafi, with the heads of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR present.

In a report dated 10 May, the agency said Sadruddin Aga Khan would present to the participants a revised plan of action for the region which would provide the framework for integrating actions already under way. Current efforts entailed in two separate plans cover countries neighbouring Iran and Iraq itself.

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United Nations

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14 May 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General tells correspondents of ongoing discussions in Baghdad between his Executive Delegate and Iraqi authorities on armed United Nations presence in Iraq.

- Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator calls for increased contributions through United Nations system to fund critical needs in Persian Gulf.

- Secretary-General's Personal Representative on Afghanistan expresses encouragement by outcome of talks with parties concerned with Afghan question.

- Disarmament Commission concludes annual session, under a new streamlined work plan, focusing this year on exchange of objective information on military matters; nuclear disarmament, regional approaches to disarmament: role of science and technology in international security.

- Issues of poverty, disparities between North and South, needs of disabled, crime prevention are highlighted by speakers in Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar this afternoon briefed correspondents about the proposed United Nations protection of Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

In reply to questions by correspondents, he said his Executive Delegate for Humanitarian Assistance in Kuwait and Iraq, Sadruddin Aga Khan, on his behalf had discussed with the Iraqi authorities the possibility of a United Nations armed presence which could "in some way encourage the Kurds to go back to their homes". However, he said, it was still too early to talk about an agreement.

Asked if there was a relationship between Iraq's agreeing to an arrangement with military personnel and the possibility of easing the

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sanctions, the Secretary-General replied that if there was rapid progress as far as implementation of the Security Council resolutions were concerned, it would only be logical that the Council started considering the lifting of sanctions.

* * *

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator has issued a report stating the financial aspects of the United Nations humanitarian action in the Gulf region.

The report, issued yesterday, stated that the total funds contributed for relief to the affected region from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) system amounted to some $300 million. That amount had increased by $88.5 million since the last financial report of 3 May.

The funding through the United Nations system, however, did not increase significantly during that period of time, according to UNDRO. Contributions to UNDRO in response to the appeal for $400.2 million last month for the plan of action for the region only amounted to $103 million. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had received some $67 million, the report stated.

* * *

The Secretary-General's Spokesman said today that Mr. Perez de Cuellar's Personal Representative on Afghanistan, Benon Sevan, had been continuing his consultations with all parties concerned with the Afghan question. Mr. Sevan had expressed encouragement by the outcome of the talks.

The Spokesman said Mr. Sevan had met today in separate meetings with Pakistan's Foreign Secretary and with leaders of a number of political parties of the resistance groups based in Peshawar.

He said that after a day of meetings on 12 May with senior officials of the Pakistani Foreign Ministry, Mr. Sevan had returned to Peshawar and had met with a group of leading commanders of the resistance.

Mr. Sevan would be returning to Peshawar tomorrow for further meetings, and would go to Kabul over the weekend before returning to New York next week.

* * *

The Disarmament Commission yesterday concluded its three-week session during which it had discussed issues such as openness and transparency on all military matters, the relationship between nuclear disarmament and international peace and security and regional disarmament. It had also examined the impact of scientific and technological developments on international security. The Commission made recommendations on these subjects, which are contained in its report to the General Assembly.

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The topics on the Commission's agenda this year reflected an effort to facilitate the Commission's work by focusing attention on four specific issues. The debate on each question is limited to three years, with four Working Groups assigned to hold informal talks on the selected topics.

The Chairman of the Commission, Peter Hohenfellner (Austria), in a closing statement, said the Commission for the first time had been working under its new organizational framework, and the reorganization process would continue in coming years.

* * *

The end of the cold war, which had raised hopes of increasing the financial flows to developing countries, had instead widened the gap between North and South, speakers stressed this morning as the Economic and Social Council's Committee dealing with social issues continued its debate of the world social situation and social development.

Issues such as the eradication of poverty, disparities between North and South and with the needs of the disabled were highlighted as challenges which must be met to improve the world social situation. A call for a sharply focused United Nations programme for crime prevention and criminal justice was also heard.

Yesterday, the Committee heard a proposal to convene a World Summit for Social Development with a focus on the human being.

The proposal was made in a statement by the Committee Chairman, Juan Somavia of Chile, who stressed that for the vast majority of the Earth's inhabitants, the source of insecurity lay in inadequate social development.

World peace could only be reached through "social peace", which he said could only be brought about through human development and sustained growth. There was a need to move towards an integrated idea of security by which a modern concept of "human security" would be developed, he said.

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CORRECTION: In Monday's Daily Highlights (Press Release DH/888 of 13 May), the last paragraph should read as follows: In a report dated 10 May, the agency said Sadruddin Aga Khan would present to the participants a revised plan of action for the region which would provide the framework for integrating actions already under way. Current efforts entailed in two separate plans cover countries neighbouring Iraq and Iraq itself.

United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/890
15 May 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General's Executive Delegate appeals for $415 million in emergency assistance for Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Kuwait; calls on international community to give United Nations wherewithal needed to carry out task it has been asked to undertake.

- Iraq protests against statement by British Prime Minister.

- Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship says $10 million has been pledged so far in response to appeal for $14.4 million for emergency relief to Liberia.

- Eradication of poverty and cooperation as means to improve situation of vulnerable groups cited in committee debate on world social situation and social development.

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The Secretary-General's Executive Delegate for humanitarian affairs in the Gulf, Sadruddin Aga Khan, today launched a red alert -- an appeal for $415 million in emergency assistance for Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Kuwait.

A United Nations press officer in Geneva reported that Sadruddin Aga Khan, speaking at a meeting in Geneva of donors and international humanitarian agencies, said the needs of Iraq were the most crucial. Refugees, including the Kurds, he said, would not go back unless there was something to go back to.

He stressed that the United Nations could not "deliver in this situation" if the Organization was not strengthened. He called on the international community to give the Organization the wherewithal that it required to enable it to carry out the task it had been asked to undertake.

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Iraq has protested against what it called an "appalling and arrogant" statement by British Prime Minister John Major that the United Kingdom would

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not allow Iraq to rejoin the international community as long as President Saddam Hussein was in power. In a letter to the President of the Security Council of 13 May, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein said the British attitude revealed that plans to destroy Iraq had been drawn up before 2 August. The destruction of Iraq and changing the regime in power was one of the main objectives of everything which occurred, he said. It was not simply a question of re-establishing the status quo ante in Kuwait.

* * *

Approximately $10 million has been pledged so far for emergency relief to Liberia in response to an appeal by the Secretary-General for $14.4 million in relief funds, according to James O.C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship.

Addressing the Economic and Social Council this morning, Mr. Jonah said the civil conflict in Liberia had had a devastating impact on the economic and social infrastructure of the country. More than three quarters of a million people had fled, which also seriously affected the economic and social infrastructures in neighbouring host countries. Noting that the real solution to the crisis must be political, he appealed to the international community to respond in the meantime to the humanitarian appeal launched by the Secretary-General.

* * *

Poverty is a cause and a consequence of most social development problems and its eradication should be of the highest priority among endeavours of the international community. That view was expressed by several speakers this morning in the Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council.

While emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in addressing the specific needs of the socially vulnerable, among them the young, the old and the disabled, speakers also voiced concern over the lack of adequate human and financial resources in the organs of the United Nations system which deal with social questions. Several of them regretted that the interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation had not fulfiled the guidelines set out by the Council.

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United Nations

Press Release

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DH/891
16 May 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Commission on Transnational Corporations urges observance of environmental standards; calls for report on corrupt practices in international business.

- Secretary-General appoints new acting Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Africa.

- Heads of World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund urge delegates at forty-fourth World Health Assembly to work for swift follow-up action to 1990 World Summit for Children.

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The Commission on Transnational Corporations has urged such corporations to observe international environmental standards and industry-agreed guidelines in their activities.

The Commission took that action as it concluded its current session last night with the consensus approval of a resolution containing its recommendations for the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1-12 June 1992).

It asked through the resolution that the Secretary-General prepare a report on the latest trends in foreign direct investment in the world economy. It reaffirmed the need to encourage and mobilize industrial enterprises, including transnational corporations, to commit themselves to environmental protection in all countries. It also reaffirmed the need to stress the positive role such corporations could play in environmental protection.

Also approved by consensus was a resolution requesting that the Secretary-General report on United Nations efforts to address the issue of corrupt practices in international business transactions.

During its session, which began on 10 April, the Commission gave high priority to transnational corporations and environmental issues and recent

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trends relating to transnational corporations and international economic relations. It focused on the policy implications of foreign direct investment, transnational corporations in "post-apartheid" South Africa and strengthening the negotiating capacity of developing countries in their dealings with transnational corporations.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today appointed Issa Diallo as Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), at the Assistant Secretary-General level, with effect from 1 August 1991 when Adebayo Adejeji will retire from the United Nations.

Mr. Diallo, a national of Guinea, has been Special Assistant to the Secretary-General since 1986. He served as Director in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General from 1985 to 1986.

Mr. Diallo has also been Assistant Director of Training at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). From 1963 to 1968, he was Deputy Director-General in the Economic and Technical Cooperation Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guinea.

* * *

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), James P. Grant, have urged delegates at the forty-fourth World Health Assembly in Geneva to work swiftly to maintain the momentum for improving the health of children and their mothers generated by last year's World Summit for Children (New York, 29-30 September 1990).

The Summit adopted the "World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children" and a related "Plan of Action" containing specific goals for the health of women and children. The Declaration followed closely on the entry into force in September last year of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In his address to the Health Assembly, Dr. Nakajima said the challenge now was to use the stimulus provided by the Summit to support countries in strengthening their health infrastructure, so as to achieve the goals it sets forth.

Mr. Grant, in his address, said that 1990 -- with the World Summit -- had seen the endorsement at the highest possible level of the principle that children's health and other essential needs should be elevated to the top rank of society's priorities and given "first call" in the allocation of resources, in bad times as well as in good times.

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United Nations

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DH/892
17 May 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General appeals for further $168 million for victims of Bangladesh cyclone; United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator to establish immediately Inter-Agency Task Force to formulate with Bangladesh Government report on rehabilitation and reconstruction.

- Special Commission to oversee destruction of Iraq's weapons begins on-site verification activities in the country.

- Economic and Social Council hears speakers call for continuing sanctions against South Africa.

- Germany contributes $5.8 million to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Gulf assistance.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar today launched a special emergency appeal for $168 million for the victims of the Bangladesh cyclone and the most immediate requirements which had not yet been covered. So far, the Government has received $250 million in bilateral and multilateral assistance.

In a statement issued at Headquarters this afternoon, the Secretary-General said he had asked the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator immediately to establish an Inter-Agency Task Force, composed of concerned organizations of the United Nations system. The Task Force would begin its work this week in Dhaka in order to formulate with the Government a consolidated report on medium-to long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The report is to be presented to the international community at a meeting in July in Geneva, within the framework of the forthcoming session of Economic and Social Council.

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For information media—not an official record

At a press briefing in Geneva on Tuesday, the UNDRO Coordinator, M'Hamed Essaafi, urged the international community to provide more assistance to Bangladesh, saying: "Bangladesh cannot manage on its own and massive external assistance is required."

Back from his mission to Bangladesh, Mr. Essaafi reported that over 2 million survivors were in immediate need of drinking water, food, shelter and medical assistance. Altogether, 9.8 million people were affected by the cyclone, according to government estimates, he said.

While the provisions of relief goods was of the utmost urgency, helicopters and small boats were required just as promptly to ensure the effective distribution of the supplies, Mr. Essaafi said. The Bangladesh authorities had estimated emergency assistance needs at $665 million, and total aid requirements, including rehabilitation and reconstruction, at $1.4 billion, the Disaster Relief Coordinator said.

The agency reported that, based on the assessment made so far by the Government of Bangladesh, 138,000 people were known to have lost their lives, and an equal number had been injured; 780,000 homes had been totally destroyed; over 1 million livestock had been killed; hundreds of thousands of acres of crops had been destroyed, hundreds of miles of roads and embankments had been washed away and thousands of boats had been lost. Almost 50,000 people were already suffering from diarrhoeal diseases brought about by polluted water and malnutrition.

* * *

A United Nations official told correspondents today that the Special Commission set up by the Security Council to monitor the destruction or rendering harmless of Iraq's weapons systems had been active in the country since Tuesday when a team of 34 people arrived in Baghdad.

He said the team had visited a nuclear research facility about 30 kilometres north of Baghdad where there are two research reactors. The area had been subjected to substantial bombing by the allied forces during the Gulf war.

Yesterday, the team had a planning day in Baghdad, based on their initial survey of the site, and today they went back to the site with explosive ordnance disposal personel and a radiation protection team, the official said.

He said it was not known how long the nuclear inspection team would be in Iraq on this its first verification mission, although an initial estimate was about one week. He added that the Special Commission was expected to send a second verification team to Iraq later this month in connection with chemical weapons.

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Calls for the United Nations to proclaim a third, and, hopefully, final Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination were heard this morning as the Economic and Social Council began consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade.

Speakers stressed the importance of maintaining sanctions against South Africa until apartheid had been totally dismantled, and urged further action to deal with problems of discrimination faced by ethnic minorities and migrant workers.

In an introductory statement, Jan Martenson, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, said that although progress had been made in efforts to ensure the equal rights of all, it was distressing that discrimination still affected many millions of people throughout the world.

Among the speakers, the representative of Morocco, Halima E. Warzazi, said the results of the Decade had so far been unsatisfactory. She blamed the paucity of resources which she said blocked progress.

She went on to say that the rise of the extreme right fed on racism and the rejection of immigrants. Such racism was even expressed in video games. The Austrian Minister of Education had called for an end to video games called "Total Auschwitz" and "Hitler Dictator No. 1" which featured torture and concentration camps. The scourge of racism and racial discrimination must be eradicated from the world, and a third Decade would be necessary towards that end, she said.

* * *

Germany has pledged $5.8 million for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)-assisted emergency interventions in southern Iraq -- the largest contribution for this emergency programme to date.

The UNICEF said in a press release yesterday that with this pledge it had received a total of $13 million to assist children and women caught in the aftermath of the Gulf war. The overall needs for UNICEF-supported interventions in Iraq total $25 million.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/893
20 May 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council decides to establish Compensation Fund to pay for war damages caused by Iraq.

- United Nations and Iraqi authorities reach agreement on establishment of security guard contingent in northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees.

- Special Commission recommends to Security Council that Iraq's ballistic missiles be destroyed on the spot since their disposal does not pose any public health threat.

- Security Council decides to establish observer mission in El Salvador with initial task of monitoring human rights.

- Secretary-General strongly deplores Israeli deportation over the weekend of four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

* * *

The Security Council decided today to establish a Compensation Fund to pay foreign Governments, nationals and corporations for loss and damage, including environmental damage, caused by Iraq during the Gulf war. By a vote of 14 in favour to none against, with Cuba abstaining, the Council decided that the Fund should be financed by Iraq's oil exports in the manner to be prescribed by a Governing Council which is to be located at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

* * *

A United Nations official told correspondents today that agreement had been reached between the United Nations and Iraqi authorities on the establishment of a security force to protect the Kurdish refugees.

He said the guard force was to be composed of staff from United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna, and might be complemented by other personnel who already had some experience in that field.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Talking to correspondents this morning, the Secretary-General said the idea was to have a force of some 400-500 observers who would be arriving in the area in two weeks. He said he was going to inform the Security Council of the implementation of the idea.

* * *

A Special Commission has recommended to the Security Council that Iraq's ballistic missiles be destroyed on the spot since their disposal does not pose any public health threat. The destruction of Iraqi weapons is to be monitored by the Commission, which was set up under the Council's resolution of 3 April.

The Commission's plan was convened to the Council in a report by the Secretary-General which said that those missiles not disposed of immediately would be secured, sealed and appropriately documented for later disposal. Items such as warheads and fuel might be moved to a special destruction location or facility and disposed of there.

The method of destruction of Iraq's chemical weapons had yet to be determined since since the process involved safety and environmental hazards, according to the report. The Special Commission would be looking into the possibility of the construction of a special destruction facility, or the use of transportable or mobile destruction equipment.

The report said negotiations were currently under way with countries that possessed the technology to destroy nuclear materials to see where the destruction will take place.

* * *

The Security Council this afternoon decided to establish a United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to monitor all agreements concluded between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), starting with verification of the Agreement on Human Rights signed by both parties at San José on 26 July 1990.

The Council unanimously approved the recommendations of the Secretary-General and established an initial mandate period of 12 months for the Mission. ONUSAL's subsequent tasks are to be subject to the Council's approval.

ONUSAL's verification tasks will include active monitoring of the human rights situation in El Salvador; investigation of specific cases of alleged human rights violations; promotion of human rights in the country; and making recommendations to eliminate violations and promote respect for human rights.

According to a report by the Secretary-General, the total cost of the Mission for the initial 12 months is estimated at approximately $32 million, including one-time major procurement of vehicles and communications equipment.

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The Secretary-General has expressed regret about the deportation by Israeli authorities over the weekend of four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

In a statement through his Spokesman, the Secretary-General strongly deplored the action, which he said was in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention on protection of civilians in time of war. He recalled the statement issued on 27 March by the President of the Security Council on behalf of its members which, inter alia, called on Israel to desist from deporting Palestinians and to ensure the safe return of those deported.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/894
21 May 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses great shock and sadness at death of Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India.

- Secretary-General appeals for further efforts to end suffering of Afghan people who, he says, have become "forgotten".

- Concern about alleged human rights violations in Kuwait during Iraqi occupation expressed by speakers in Economic and Social Council's Social Committee.

- Anti-Apartheid Committee expresses deep concern over deteriorating physical condition of South African political prisoners on hunger strike.

* * *

Following news of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar sent a telegram of condolences to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi in which he expressed great shock and sadness.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said in the telegram that Mr. Gandhi was a remarkable political leader, whose impact was felt not only in his own country but around the world. He praised Mr. Gandhi's deep understanding of international relations, and his commitment to the United Nations which, he said, was a source of great encouragement to him.

It was all the more tragic, the Secretary-General said, that Rajiv Gandhi's passing took place at a time when India, once again, was giving evidence of its longstanding devotion to the democratic process.

* * *

In a statement issued today, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar said reports of active hostilities in Afghanistan over the last few weeks had reconfirmed his concern that further efforts were needed to bring about an end to the suffering of the Afghan population.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

At a time when other developments seemed to be attracting the attention of the world, the Afghans had become a forgotten people, he said. He urged that advantage be taken of the growing determination of the international community to assist in the alleviation of human suffering so as to end the Afghan problem.

The Secretary-General said he was encouraged by the views expressed by all parties in the just-concluded round of consultations undertaken on his behalf by his Personal Representative in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Benon Sevan. The talks, which concluded yesterday, were held with all segments of the Afghan people, including political leaders of opposition groups and resistance commanders, as well as prominent Afghans currently residing outside the region and the Government.

Outlining the basis for a political settlement, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar stressed the necessity of preserving the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned and Islamic character of Afghanistan. A transition period was needed, he said, details of which had to be worked out and agreed upon through an intra-Afghan dialogue, leading to the establishment of a broad-based Government.

The Secretary-General said he intended to continue his discussions with all concerned in order to encourage and facilitate the working out of the details of a negotiated settlement.

* * *

Concern about alleged human rights violations in Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation was expressed by several speakers as the Economic and Social Council's Social Committee continued its consideration of human rights questions yesterday.

In reply, the representative of Iraq said those delegations criticizing his country had themselves violated the human rights of the Iraqi people through bombardment and economic blockade.

The politicization of human rights continued to prevent authentic international cooperation and a constructive approach to human rights questions, speakers said. The connection between democracy, sustainable development and human rights was stressed. The fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance as well as the question of human rights and the environment were also discussed.

* * *

The Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), said today that the Committee was deeply concerned about the deteriorating physical condition of the South African political prisoners on hunger strike for the last three weeks to demand their immediate release.

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In addition, he said, the Committee was greatly disturbed by reports of inhumane treatment of those political prisoners who had been hospitalized as a result of their hunger strike. Such reports should, in the view of the Special Committee, be impartially investigated, and action to redress any abuses should be taken promptly.

The Special Committee called on the international community to demand that the South African authorities comply with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, which called for the release of all political prisoners.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/895
22 May 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General recommends that mandate of United Nations Angola Verification Mission be renewed and enlarged.

- Experts complete first on-site inspection of Iraq's nuclear capabilities as authorized by Security Council.

- Iraq protests against Security Council decision to let Iraqi oil exports pay for war damages caused by that country during Gulf war.

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees offers its assistance to four Palestinians from Gaza Strip who are expelled to Lebanon by Israel.

- 1991 Human Development Report says financial resources can be found to provide human development for all.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has recommended to the Security Council that the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) be enlarged and extended to enable the Mission to verify the new cease-fire.

In a report to the Security Council, dated 20 May, the Secretary-General said the enlargement of the force was in response to the Peace Accords for Angola which were agreed on 1 May by the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The cease-fire and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angolan territory are expected to take effect by the end of the month.

By entrusting the main tasks to the parties themselves, costs to the international community would be reduced at a time when there was an ever-growing demand for funds for peace-keeping, he said.

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For information media—not an official record

The first team of international experts to visit Iraq under the terms of the Security Council cease-fire resolution of 3 April has just completed its initial work and is back in Vienna.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last week carried out the first inspection in Iraq with the assistance and cooperation of the Special Commission established under the resolution. The inspection involved a team of 34 experts, which included nationals from 19 countries.

Following the initial inspections, the Agency is charged with developing and carrying out a plan for the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of all nuclear-weapons-usable material.

The Agency said the Government of Iraq had cooperated fully and had complied with all requests of the IAEA team during the inspections.

* * *

Iraq has protested against the decision of the Security Council to establish a Compensation Fund -- financed by Iraq's oil exports -- to pay for war damages caused by Iraq during the Gulf war.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 20 May, Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Al-Anbari said the Council had violated the norms of international law by not asking the United States and its partners to compensate Iraq for the damage and destruction inflicted on Iraq during the war.

He said Iraq had been suffering from a full economic embargo since last August in addition to the destruction as a result of the air war and was in need of many times its oil revenue in order to meet the urgent requirements of reconstructing the country.

For that reason, the Ambassador said, Iraq had requested a moratorium of five years, during which no part of its limited oil revenues would be appropriated, in order to enable it to provide basic requirements for the Iraqi people. By ignoring that request, he said, the Council was failing to respect the right of life of the Iraqi people.

* * *

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has offered its assistance to four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, including two UNRWA staff members, who were expelled to Lebanon by the Israeli authorities on Saturday, 18 May.

The UNRWA deplored the expulsion of the four men, who are all Palestine refugees registered with the Agency, and two of whom are UNRWA employees.

Meanwhile, Lebanon has condemned the expulsion of the Palestinians to Lebanese territory. In a letter to the Secretary-General of 20 May, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, Khalil Makkawi, objected to the violation

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by Israel of the Lebanese sovereignty and territory, saying the move was counter to the United Nations Charter, as well as human rights norms and Security Council resolutions.

In a similar letter, the Palestine Observer Mission has also protested against the deportations. The Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine, Riyad Mansour, said Israel should be made to ensure the safe and immediate return of all the expelled Palestinians to their homes.

* * *

Lack of political will -- not financial resources -- is the real cause of human neglect, according to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), William H. Draper III.

Speaking to the press today in Washington, D.C. at the inauguration of the Human Development Report 1991, he said the report had broken new ground last year by ranking countries by a Human Development Index which rated national success in terms of life expectancy, adult literacy and purchasing power.

Mr. Draper said the importance of the report was that it showed that the financial resources to provide basic services for all could be found if priorities were recast.

For the first time, the UNDP report ranks countries on a Human Freedom Index, which ranks countries according to 40 measures of liberty, such as press freedom, multi-party elections and right to travel and assembly. Sweden and Denmark headed the Human Freedom Index list, with Iraq at the very bottom.

The report is critical of developing countries for not spending enough on areas of urgent human needs. In Angola, Chad, Pakistan, Peru, Syria, Uganda and Zaire, for example, arms spending is at least double the amount spent on health and education.

Donor countries are not above criticism. They allocate a mere .03 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) for foreign aid -- well below the .7 per cent targeted by the international community.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/896
23 May 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council holds consultations on situation in occupied Arab territories.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees sends 45 Scandinavian field officers to Baghdad to strengthen its humanitarian operations in Iraq.

- Secretary-General to embark on three-week trip to Africa and Europe during which he will attend OAU summit; witness signing of agreement between Government of Angola and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA); attend high-level meeting in Geneva of United Nations humanitarian agencies involved in Gulf crisis, among other things.

- Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices against Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories begins two-week field mission to Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

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The Security Council held consultations today on the situation in the Israeli occupied territories following the deportation over the weekend of four Palestinians, including two staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), from the Gaza Strip.

Speaking to correspondents before the meeting, United States Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering said his delegation was circulating a draft presidential statement which would call on Israel to abide by the the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention on protection of civilians in time of war. The text also stated that expulsions might have a negative impact on the current peace process in the region.

The President of the Security Council, on 15 March, had issued a statement on behalf of its members in which he had called on Israel to refrain from deporting Palestinians and to ensure their safe return.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

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The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today sent 45 Scandinavian field officers to Baghdad to strengthen its humanitarian operations in three Iraqi provinces.

A UNHCR communique issued today in Geneva said the field officers would establish relief stations on routes used by Iraqis returning home from Iran and Turkey.

Reporting from Geneva, a United Nations press officer said a senior UNHCR delegation was on its way to the region to discuss with coalition officials the hand-over to the agency of all humanitarian missions in northern Iraq. The delegation would consult with coalition officers on the time-table and logistics of UNHCR's plan to assume full responsibility for all humanitarian relief operations including food, medical assistance and voluntary repatriation programmes in the area.

According to UNHCR field reports, more than 320,000 Iraqis had left encampments along with mountainous frontier with Turkey and were headed for home. A spontaneous repatriation movement from Iran was also gaining momentum and field workers estimated that more than 200,000 refugees had returned to their villages.

According to UNHCR, about 120,000 refugees remained on the Iraq/Turkey border, with about 1.3 million Iraqis in Iran.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar will leave New York over the weekend on a three-week trip to Africa and Europe, which will take him first to Morocco for talks with King Hassan II.

On 26 May, he will travel to Algiers for talks with President Chadli Bendjedid and other Algerian officials before moving on to Lisbon, where on 31 May, he will witness the signing of the cease-fire agreement reached on 1 May between the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

On 1 June, the Secretary-General will return to Africa, where on 3 and 4 June he will attend the regular summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Abuja, Nigeria.

He will then pay an official visit to Sierra Leone on 5 and 6 June, and to Guinea-Bissau on 9 and 10 June.

On 13 June he will go to Geneva for a high-level meeting of United Nations humanitarian agencies on the Gulf crisis.

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On 14 June, the Secretary-General will travel to Bern where he will attend the ceremonies marking the 700th anniversary of the Swiss confederation after which he will return to New York.

* * *

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories yesterday began a two-week field mission to Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

The Committee will review the latest developments relating to the human rights situation in the territories occupied by Israel. It will also collect the testimony of persons with first-hand experience of the situation.

In its 1990 report to the Assembly, the Committee stated that the period under consideration had been marked by a further escalation of the tension in the occupied territories, which had now reached a very dangerous level. Urgent measures were needed, the report stated, to avoid the grave human rights violations and ensure the effective protection of basic rights and freedoms.

The report also indicated a trend towards the hardening of repression and the worsening of the already precarious human rights situation of the Arab civilian population.

In the absence of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Committee called for the full application by Israel of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention on protection of civilians in time of war as well as Security Council resolutions on the subject.

In a separate development, UNRWA has protested to the Israeli authorities in the occupied Gaza Strip concerning incidents in which two of the Agency's international staff members had allegedly been struck and abused by Israeli border police.

According to UNRWA, the incidents occurred last Friday in the Shaboura quarter of the Rafah refugee camp when Agency staff attempted to intervene with Israeli border police contingents who had been reported to be mistreating camp residents.

In a written protest to the Israeli Civil Administration in Gaza, UNRWA said it was "very concerned about the increasing number of assaults on its staff by members of the border police". The Agency said those acts were incompatible with Israel's obligations to facilitate UNRWA's tasks. The UNRWA has asked for an investigation into the latest incidents.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/897
24 May 1991

F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- Security Council unanimously deplores recent deportation by Israel of four Palestinians from occupied territories and calls for safe and immediate return of all those deported.

- United Nations and Iraq reach agreement on modalities for operation of security guard contingent in northern Iraq.

- Secretary-General expresses deep concern about condition of political prisoners currently on hunger strike in South Africa.

- Next round of talks between Government of El Salvador and Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) to begin in Venezuela this weekend.

- Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend mandate of United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in Golan Heights for a further period of 6 months, until 30 November; calls situation in Middle East "potentially dangerous".

* * *

Meeting at the request of its non-aligned members, the Security Council tonight unanimously adopted a resolution deeply deploring the recent deporation by Israel of four Palestinians from the occupied territories and calling for the safe and immediate return of all those deported.

The resolution declared the deportations to be in violation of the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in wartime which, it said, was applicable to all Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

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(more)

For information media—not an official record

Agreement was reached today in Baghdad between the Secretary-General's Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, and the Iraqi authorities on the modalities for a 500-member United Nations security guard contingent in northern Iraq.

A United Nations official today told correspondents that 10 guards were already at their post in Dohuk; another 30 were to join them on Monday (27 May), and approximately 30 more would arrive in the area by the end of the week. All in all, some 460 guards were expected to be recruited from Geneva, Vienna and New York, possibly including some former staff members who would be re-hired.

Meanwhile, a United Nations press officer reporting from Geneva today quoted the Secretary-General Executive Delegate Sadruddin Aga Khan as saying that the guards would act as "moral witnesses" to help inspire confidence for refugees returning to the country.

Sadruddin Aga Khan told the press that the unprecedented operation would be financed by voluntary contributions and that he would be discussing the matter with humanitarian agencies in Geneva on Monday. He said he was optimistic about funding since the operation followed a request from the three western permanent members of the Security Council. The humanitarian operations involving United Nations security guards in Iraq were a "revolutionary challenge", he said.

* * *

The Secretary-General said today, through his Spokesman, that he was deeply concerned at the condition of the political prisoners currently on hunger strike in South Africa. He called on the Government of South Africa to address urgently what he described as "this serious situation".

He said he hoped that the Government would ensure the prompt release of all political prisoners in accordance with the commitments it had undertaken and the expectations of the international community.

* * *

A United Nations spokesman said today that the next round of talks between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) would begin in Venezuela this weekend. He said the talks would concentrate as a matter of priority on a political agreement on the armed forces and the accords necessary for the cessation of the armed confrontation. Both the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Alvaro de Soto, and Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding would be conducting the talks on cease-fire arrangements.

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